



# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND NON-VOCATIONAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KERALA

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## ABSTRACT

Life skills occur over the developmental period of one's life. Growth and development are the two important tasks of childhood. Growth is physical and mainly observed as increase in height, weight and appearance of age related changes in the body. Development, on the other hand, is more complex and involves mastering those characteristics and tasks, which help one to grow into an adult who has good self-esteem, is socially integrated, faces changes and challenges, copes and adapts to conflicts and stress. Acquiring the life skills is very important in one's life. It help the students to make formal decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathies with others and manage their live in a healthy and productive manner. The objective of the present study was to compare life skill on vocational and non vocational higher secondary schools of Kerala. In this present study, from the data analysis of both the percentage analysis and the test of significance of difference between means are used. The investigator arrived at the conclusion that the vocational higher secondary students are comparatively better in their life skills.

**KEY WORD:** Life skills.

## INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of education is to develop the intellectual, emotional and social understanding of all students. This purpose is accomplished by providing a system of aesthetic, physical and cognitive education that enriches the individual lives of students prepares them for the world of work and promotes the common good of a democratic society. Education basically suffers from the gap between its content and living experiences of the learners. Life skills are the abilities that help to promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. It helps the young people to take positive actions to protect themselves and to promote health and meaningful social relationship. Life skill facilitates a complete and integrated development of individuals to function effectively as social beings. Life skills can be innumerable, some specific to certain risk situation and others of a generic nature. Common elements of life skills which were found across all cultures and settings, in the developed and the developing countries, are self awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship skill, effective communication, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

Children in the higher secondary level (10+2 level) are in the stage of adolescence and are recognized as extremely vulnerable to high risk behaviour. Healthy development of adolescents depends on several interactive and complex factors. They include the socio-economic circumstances in which a person is born, the environment in which they grow-up, their interpersonal relationship within the family, peer group pressure, values of the community in which they live and the opportunities for education and employment. Through this comprehensive school-based programme for children and adolescents, we will introduce life skills in a supportive learning environment. Around the world, Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations. LSBE refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills which support the adoption of healthy behaviour.

## Need and Significance of the Study

Life skills are developed as a result of a constructive processing of information, impressions, encounters and experiences, - both individual and social - that are a part of one's daily life and work and the rapid changes that occur in the course of one's life. The social dimensions are particularly important as they condition life itself and compel individuals to purposefully acquire skills, develop attitudes and values in order to face and master real life situations.

The students at the higher secondary level are in the age of adolescents and are in the period of stress and strain. According to Bigge and Hent "the one word which best characterizes adolescence is change. The change is physiological, sociological and psychological". In this period, the life skills development is very important because adolescents are considered as the most productive members of the society, due to their physical and intellectual capacity. But it is said to recognize the fact that most of the adolescents is unable to utilize their potential in an appropriate way due to lack of guidance and motivation.

The students at the higher secondary level are in the age of adolescents where in the midst of so many problems and issues. In this context, it should be necessary that everyone should acquire life skills such as critical thinking, decision mak-

ing, problem solving, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship, effective communication, coping with stress and coping with emotions to defend ourselves with the disintegrating forces confronting us.

Youths are engaged in many antisocial activities which adversely affect other members of the society. These high-risk behaviors affecting society in a large extend. This challenge requires immediate and effective responses from socially responsible system of education. It may be noted that no university or board of school education has come forward to initiate such a programme in the country, which may be beneficial to our young people. In this connection, life skill education plays vital role to increase the awareness among youth about all social problems and to alleviate social evils from the society. Life skill education helps the individual to improve the decision making skill, ability to take every thing in the right sense and also improve their contributions to the society.

## Objectives of the Study

- To compare the life skill development of vocational higher secondary school students and non-vocational higher secondary school students for the total sample.

## Methodology in Brief

### Selection of Sample:

The study was conducted by using survey method on representative samples of 300 from which 150 among vocational higher secondary school and 150 among non-vocational higher secondary school students from 8 school of Kannur district of Kerala from which 4 among vocational higher secondary and 4 among non-vocational higher secondary schools.

## Tools Employed:

### 1. Life Skill Development Scale

For testing the life skills of vocational and non - vocational higher secondary school students the investigator prepared a life skill development scale with the help of the guide. The life skills are inter-related. So the investigator selects six components.

The investigator prepared 40 questions on the basis of 6 components such as self awareness, empathy, decision making, interpersonal relationship, communication skills and career. The investigator selected 6 schools for collecting the data among 150 students from vocational higher secondary schools and 150 students from non-vocational higher secondary schools.

## Statistical Technique Used

The investigator used the following statistical techniques for the data analysis

1. Arithmetic mean and Standard Deviation
2. Percentage analysis
3. Test of significance of the difference between means

## RESULTS

- Comparison of Life Skill Development of Vocational and Non-vocational Higher Secondary School Students for the Total Sample.
- To find out the life skills of vocational higher secondary students in Kannur

district for the total sample comparison of the mean scores of life skills of vocational and non-vocational higher secondary students for the total sample was done by testing the significance of mean difference. The result has summarized in the table 6.

**Table 1**

**Data and result of test of significance of difference in mean scores of life skills of vocational and non-vocational higher secondary students for the total sample**

Vocational higher secondary students			Non-vocational higher secondary students			C R
N <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	
150	94.33	6.6	150	86.89	7.1	9.39

Table 1 shows that the value of the critical ratio is 9.39, which is significant at 0.05 level. Since the obtained value is greater than the value required for significance, it can be inferred that vocational and non-vocational higher secondary students differ significantly in their life skills.

#### **Educational Implications**

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following educational implications are suggested for consideration.

1. Teacher should be identified the clear objectives and student outcomes.
2. Teacher should focus on the whole child or student.
3. Teacher should implement student-centered learning.
4. Teacher should understand one's own feelings and emotions.
5. Teacher should understand the problems of the students.
6. Teacher should understand insecurity feeling of the students.
7. Teacher should express empathy and interest for others.
8. Teacher should build a strong rapport with the students.
9. Teacher should focus on critical thinking or high-order thinking for students.
10. Teachers should try to involve parents in learning activities.
11. Teachers should be provided proper training to ensure effectiveness.
12. Co-operative and collaborative learning activities and peer tutoring should be promoted.
13. Field visits, study tours etc. should be conducted.
14. Teacher should create suitable environment in which students can know each other and develop their life skills.

#### **Conclusion**

In this present study, from the data analysis of both the percentage analysis and the test of significance of difference between means, the investigator arrived at the conclusion that the vocational higher secondary students are comparatively better in their life skills.

Development of life skills is closely linked to pedagogy of active learning. Through the participative teaching methods such as role play, debates, discussion, situation analysis and one-on-one problem solving, life skills programs can actively engage young people in their own development process.

It is hoped that the present study will provide highly generalize prediction of the behavioural characteristics of vocational and non-vocational higher secondary students and that it will be of great help for the curriculum planners and administrators.

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